

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 120688 TOSEC 010254

73

ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 (ISO) R

DRAFTED BY EA:WBGLEYSTEEN:EA/PRCM:OVARMSTRONG:

APPROVED BY S/S:LCJOHNSTONE

S/P - WLORD

NSC - RSOLOMON (SUBS.)

----- 032061

O 230123Z MAY 75 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 120688 TOSEC 010254

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CH CB

SUBJECT: PRC COMMENT ON MAYAGUEZ OPERATION

REF: A) TOSEC 10192; B) SECTO 1106; C) SECTO 1110

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM LORD AND GLEYSTEEN

1. WE ARE SENDING YOU SEPARATELY A FULL TEXT OF THE LATEST PEKING COMMENTARY ON THE MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR, WHICH IS THE SHARPEST PRC CRITICISM OF THE U.S. FOR SOME TIME. IT HAS AN INSULTINGLY SARCASTIC TONE (E.G., "LET THE GENTLEMEN IN WASHINGTON PRIDE THEMSELVES ON THEIR WORK. FOR ALL THEIR SELF-GLORIFICATION, THE U.S. IS MORE TARNISHED TODAY THAN IT WAS A LITTLE OVER A MONTH AGO WHEN THE U.S. SUFFERED TOTAL DEFEAT BY THE INDOCHINESE PEOPLE.") IT ALSO CONTAINS THE MOST POINTED RECENT REFERENCE TO THE UNITED STATES AS A "PAPER TIGER." DESPITE ITS UNAUTHORITATIVE FORMAT--AN ARTICLE BY AN NCNA CORRESPONDENT--A PIECE WITH THIS TONE AND CONTENT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY REQUIRE HIGH-LEVEL

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 120688 TOSEC 010254

APPROVAL IN PEKING.

2. WE DO NOT YET HAVE ENOUGH CONTEXT TO MAKE A SATISFACTORY ASSESSMENT OF PEKING'S MOTIVES IN PURSUING THIS PROPAGANDA LINE. THERE IS AN OBVIOUS ELEMENT OF REACTION

INVOLVED. THE CHINESE HAVE MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT OUR DEFEATS IN INDOCHINA, AND THEIR HIGH-TONED LANGUAGE CAN BE PARTLY EXPLAINED BY ITS APPEAL TO INDOCHINESE, THIRD WORLD, AND DOMESTIC CHINESE AUDIENCES. THEY UNDOUBTEDLY BELIEVE WE OVER-REACTED. MOREOVER, THEY ARE CLEARLY ANNOYED THAT OUR ACTIONS TO ENGAGE THEM IN RELEASE OF THE MAYAGUEZ HAD THE EFFECT OF PUTTING THEM IN A VERY EXPOSED POSITION. THE REFERENCES TO "PAPER TIGER" AND THE HEAVY SARCASM, HOWEVER, ARE HARDER TO EXPLAIN BECAUSE OF THEIR BEARING ON NORMALIZATION AND US/SOVIET/PRC RELATIONSHIPS. IN ANY CASE, WE WILL NEED TO KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON THIS POTENTIALLY DISTURBING ASPECT OF PEKING'S CURRENT PUBLIC TREATMENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

3. WE STILL HAVE SOME RESERVATIONS ABOUT TAKING ACTION NOW: THE CHINESE UNDOUBTEDLY FELT THEMSELVES EXPOSED BY SOME OF OUR MOVES INVOLVING THEM IN THIS ISSUE; THEY ARE IN A TOUGH BIND WITH VARIOUS AUDIENCES; AND WE MIGHT APPEAR OVERLY DEFENSIVE ABOUT PROVING OUR MANHOOD. SOLOMON THINKS ON BALANCE THAT FOR THESE REASONS WE SHOULD HOLD OFF FOR A WEEK OR SO TO SEE IF PEKING'S LINE CONTINUES. LORD AND GLEYSTEN BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD KEEP OPEN THE OPTION OF YOUR CALLING IN HUANG CHEN LATER TO MAKE SOME POINTS MORE FIRMLY AND AUTHORITATIVELY, BUT ON BALANCE AGREE WITH YOU THAT WE SHOULD GO AHEAD AT THEIR LEVEL NOW.

4. ACCORDINGLY, UNLESS YOU INSTRUCT US TO THE CONTRARY, WE INTEND TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE CHINESE FRIDAY AT 10:00 AM, WASHINGTON TIME, AND TO MAKE THE REPRESENTATION TO HAN HSU LATER THE SAME DAY. WE WOULD INTEND TO USE THE FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS:

-- I HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO LET YOU KNOW THAT WE HAVE NOTED SOME OF THE RECENT CHINESE COMMENTARIES ON DEVELOP-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 120688 TOSEC 010254

MENTS IN THE INDOCHINA AREA, PARTICULARLY REGARDING THE MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR.

-- YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH OUR FULL PUBLIC STATEMENTS REGARDING THE MAYAGUEZ PROBLEM, BUT LET ME REVIEW BRIEFLY SEVERAL POINTS.

-- IN THE FIRST PLACE, BY INTERNATIONAL LAW AND PRACTICE, THE MAYAGUEZ HAD THE RIGHT OF INNOCENT PASSAGE.

-- ON THE OTHER HAND, THE CAMBODIAN ACTION IN SEIZING THE VESSEL AND CREW WAS CONTRARY TO ALL STANDARDS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND PRACTICE.

-- THE CHARGE THAT THE VESSEL WAS ENGAGED IN ANY SPYING ACTIVITY IS ABSOLUTELY WITHOUT ANY BASIS IN FACT.

-- AS YOU KNOW, WE TRIED TO OBTAIN THE RELEASE OF THE CREW AND VESSEL BY DIPLOMATIC MEANS. BUT IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY RESPONSE FROM THE CAMBODIANS, WE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ACT AS WE DID TO RECOVER THE CREW AND SHIP AND TO MAINTAIN OUR POSITION ON FREEDOM OF THE SEAS.

-- WE RECOGNIZE THAT YOU DO NOT SHARE OUR VIEWS ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE INDOCHINA SITUATION, AND WE ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT YOUR COMMENTARIES MAY BE DIRECTED AT VARIOUS AUDIENCES.

-- AT THE SAME TIME, ONE OF THE AUDIENCES, INTENDED OR NOT, IS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. AND AS YOU WELL KNOW, ALL OF THEM ARE IMPORTANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

-- FURTHERMORE, AS SECRETARY KISSINGER STATED TO AMBASSADOR HUANG, THE U.S. DOES NOT INTEND TO BE STRATEGICALLY PASSIVE, AND WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS IN YOUR INTEREST TO IMPLY OTHERWISE.

-- I HAVE THEREFORE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO LET YOU KNOW THAT WE CONSIDER THE TONE AND CONTENT OF RECENT CHINESE STATEMENTS TO BE UNJUSTIFIED AND UNHELPFUL.

INGERSOLL

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 120688 TOSEC 010254

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SHIP DETENTION, FOREIGN RELATIONS, TOSEC 10254, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, MAYAGUEZ SS, RESCUE OPERATIONS, CAT-C
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE120688
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: WBGLEYSTEEN:EA/PRCM:OVARMSTRONG:
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P850036-2233
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750522/aaaaatvd.tel
Line Count: 154
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 75 TOSEC 10192, 75 SECTO 1106, 75 SECTO 1110
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <03 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRC COMMENT ON MAYAGUEZ OPERATION
TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, CH, CB, US
To: SECRETARY PARIS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006